

# Homeowners Guide to Common Invasive Plants in Gresham



Which is Which:  
Friend or Foe?



City of Gresham





## Does Your Yard Harbor the Enemy?

Help Gresham fight invasion and save its natural areas by using this guide to spot and remove invasive weeds from your property.

### When Green Isn't Good

People have introduced foreign plant species to Gresham, whether intentionally for agriculture and horticulture, or accidentally as a seed in the mud of a hiker's boot. These plant species are "invasive." Without natural enemies, these non-native transplants dominate local natural areas and crowd out native plant species. Local wildlife is impacted when the native plants they use for food and shelter are choked out by invasive weeds. Invasive plant species also promote soil erosion and stream bank failure in Gresham by crowding out deeply-rooting native plants along local streams.

### Warning

Parts of some plants are toxic so beware especially if you have children or pets.

#### Invasives

- ✦ Bittersweet nightshade
- ✦ English holly
- ✦ English ivy
- ✦ English laurel
- ✦ Yellow flag iris



#### Natives

- ✦ Western/Pacific rhododendron

#### For more information

OHSU, Oregon Poison Center, Plant Safety  
[www.ohsu.edu/poison/youandyourfamily/plantsafety.htm](http://www.ohsu.edu/poison/youandyourfamily/plantsafety.htm)



## Bittersweet Nightshade (*Solanum dulcamara*)

Perennial climbing vine  
with woody texture

### Why it's Invasive

Climbs into and over native  
vegetation, crowding it out,  
particularly in sensitive  
streamside areas.

### Identification

- ✦ trailing or climbing woody vine
- ✦ stem is light tan to light green with warty bumps
- ✦ leaves are 2 - 4 inches long, arrow-shaped main leaf with two smaller leaflets at base
- ✦ clusters of small, dark purple flowers with yellow anthers
- ✦ flowers turn to bright red berries in fall
- ✦ unpleasant odor when bruised or crushed



© Sten Porse

### Removal

Remove small infestations manually by digging or pulling out vine and underground roots. Cut before flowers turn to berries to keep from re-seeding. Any underground parts not removed will resprout. In severe infestations, cutting and painting cut stems with a glyphosate-based herbicide is recommended (follow label and state requirements for herbicide use.)



## Replacement Recommendation

Orange honeysuckle  
(*Lonicera ciliosa*)

- ✦ climbing vine with tubular orange flowers



Above left: Hummingbirds, such  
as the Rufous Hummingbird,  
feed on nectar from this plant.  
Dean Biggins/USFWS

© Walter Siegmund



© Forest & Kim Starr, USGS, Bugwood.org

## Butterfly Bush

(*Buddleia davidii*)

Tall deciduous shrub grows to 15 feet tall with purple, cone-shaped flowers

### Why it's Invasive

Crowds out native vegetation by forming dense thickets, especially along river banks and gravel bars. Seeds easily dispersed up to five miles away.

### Identification

- ♦ thin, hairy, pointed leaves, often green or blue-gray above and lighter underneath
- ♦ flowers in tube-shaped, nodding clusters, often purple with orange centers
- ♦ each cone produces about 40,000 seeds

### Removal

Butterfly Bush is resistant to herbicides. Hand removal is possible. Digging up the plant and roots is most effective. In a garden setting, remove seed heads after the plant flowers to prevent spread into natural areas. Dig up new seedlings diligently.

### Warning

Plant material will resprout if left on the ground. Put all plant parts in your yard debris bin for pickup.

## Replacement Recommendation

### Red-flowering currant

(*Ribes sanguineum*)

- ♦ bright red, early spring flowers
- ♦ grows up to 15 feet tall



Hummingbirds, such as Anna's Hummingbird, feed on nectar from Red-flowering currant blossoms.

© Kevin Cole



## Clematis/Traveler's Joy (*Clematis vitalba*)

Deciduous, perennial vine with climbing, woody stems that can grow 50 - 90 feet long

### Why it's Invasive

This fast-growing ornamental vine climbs trees, blocking sunlight to tree leaves and native vegetation below and becomes so dense the weight of the vines can break the supporting tree.



© Flowers (top) and seed heads, Jan Samanek, State Phytosanitary Administration, Bugwood.org

### Identification

- leaves have jagged edges, usually with five leaflets per stem
- flowers are white to greenish-white, about  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch in diameter with four full sepals (petal-like leaves) arranged at 90-degree angles and many smaller sepals surrounding the reproductive parts in the center
- flowers dry into white feathery tufts containing relatively large brown seeds, dispersed by wind

### Removal

Clip vines at chest height to kill clematis in trees. Pull all roots out of soil when possible. Eliminate clematis before flowers turn into puffballs of seeds.

## Replacement Recommendation

Rock clematis  
(*Clematis columbiana*)

- vine with attractive light purple flowers
- attracts pollinators

Sally and Andy Wasowski





## English Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*)

Shiny evergreen shrub or tree with prickly leaves and red berries

### Why it's Invasive

Forms dense thickets that crowd out native shrubs and small trees.

### Identification

- large, dense, slow-growing, evergreen tree or shrub, 15 - 50 feet tall and up to 15 feet wide or more
- shiny, dark green leaves usually have

sharp spines along edges; small white flowers, sweetly scented

- holly spreads through seed dispersal by birds and by sprouting from roots of existing plants

### Removal

Small sprouts easily removed by hand. Cut down large shrubs and remove roots with a weed wrench, or paint stump with a glyphosate-based herbicide (follow label and state requirements for herbicide use). Will resprout if cut to the ground; stumps will send off suckers if left untreated.

### Warning

Be careful not to pull native Oregon grape. Tall Oregon grape also has shiny green leaves that may have spines, but has compound leaves with multiple leaflets per one long stem. Oregon grape has yellow flowers and dark purple berries.

## Replacement Recommendation

### Tall Oregon grape

(*Berberis aquifolium* or *Mahonia aquifolium*)

- evergreen to red in winter
- Oregon state flower
- great for hedges

Above right:

Cedar Waxwings eat

Oregon grape berries.

Dave Menke/FWS



## English Ivy (*Hedera helix*)

Evergreen climbing vine and ground cover

### Why it's Invasive

Smothers native plants, often topples trees, and steals light and nutrients. Mats of ground ivy crowd out native ground covers, eliminating food and cover for wildlife.

### Identification

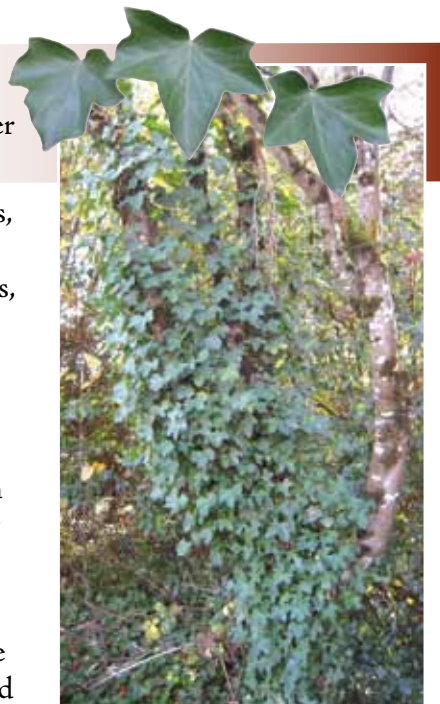
- ✦ dark green leaves with white veins are waxy to somewhat leathery
- ✦ fall flowers are small, pale yellow-green clusters at top of the plant, followed by black-purple berries

### Removal

Separate all ivy in the tree from its roots in the ground by cutting vines at waist height around the circumference of the tree; then remove ground roots within a 3 foot radius of the trunk. Leave vines in trees to die. Ground ivy is easily removed by hand; monitor for resprouts. Cutting ivy in late fall while it is flowering can stop seed production in spring.

### Warning

Trees heavily draped with ivy may be weak and hazardous if near roads, walkways and homes. Do not pull ivy out of tree; this will damage the tree's bark and weaken the tree.



## Replacement Recommendation



### Kinnickinnick (*Arctostaphylos uva ursi*)

- ✦ evergreen, fire resistant ground cover
- ✦ good nesting and cover for wildlife



## English Laurel (*Prunus laurocerasus*)

Evergreen shrub or tree reaching 10 - 20 feet, often grown as a privacy hedge

### Why it's Invasive

Aggressively reproduces from seed and escapes into forests and riparian areas where it forms stands that crowd out native vegetation.

### Identification

- ♦ dark green, waxy leaves with pointy tips
- ♦ purple to black berries in summer

Karduelis



- ♦ buds are light green; fragrant white flowers with erect clusters bloom in spring

### Removal

Complete eradication from landscaping is desirable, but diligent removal of new seedlings and clipping of flowers before they become berries will help suppress spread.

## Replacement Recommendations

Pacific wax myrtle  
(*Myrica californica*)

Western/Pacific rhododendron  
(*Rhododendron macrophyllum*)

- ♦ light to dark pink blooms
- ♦ provides nesting and shelter for birds

Hummingbirds, bees and butterflies, such as the Western Tiger Swallowtail (above), are attracted to this native rhododendron (right).



Western Tiger Swallowtail  
© William M. Ciesla,  
Forest Health Management  
International, Bugwood.org





## Garlic Mustard (*Allaria petiolata*)

Deciduous ground-covering herb,  
prefers moist forest understory

### Why it's Invasive

Secretes a toxin into the soil that prevents growth and development of other plants around it. Once introduced, garlic mustard can cover the entire forest understory, out-competing native plants and eliminating native food sources for wildlife.

### Identification

- ✦ flowering plants reach 2 - 3½ feet tall
- ✦ leaves triangular to heart-shaped, with coarsely toothed edges
- ✦ button-like clusters of small white flowers, each with four petals in the shape of a cross
- ✦ smells like garlic when crushed



© Chris Evans, River to River CWMA, Bugwood.org

### Removal

Easy to pull manually when young. Remove entire plant before flowers and seeds develop. In spring, seeds grow in slender pods and turn shiny black when mature.

### Warning

Remove plants at the pod stage (April/May); seeds will sprout if dropped.

## Replacement Recommendation

### Wild ginger (*Asarum caudatum*)

- ✦ ground cover with dark green leaves
- ✦ aromatic ginger roots are edible



John Davis/www.fs.fed.us/wildflowers

## Himalayan Blackberry (*Rubus discolor*)

A thicket-forming perennial, deciduous shrub up to 10 feet tall with canes or runners up to 40 feet long

### Why it's Invasive

Canes form impenetrable thickets that shade out low growing native vegetation and inhibit tree regeneration. Dry canes can fuel wildfires.

### Identification

- ✦ older plants have thick, red canes with large thorns
- ✦ early summer flowers are small, white to pinkish
- ✦ five toothed leaflets per leaf stem arranged in a star-like pattern
- ✦ produces large, edible black berries in late summer

### Removal

Clip canes back and dig up root crown to prevent resprouting. Parent plants have large, woody root balls underground that will re-sprout repeatedly after cutting. Mowing during fall and mid-summer months for three to five consecutive years will eventually exhaust and kill root balls. Paint cut stems in fall with a glyphosate-based herbicide for severe infestations.

### Warning

Don't pull native trailing blackberry. This plant "trails" mainly along the ground and has thin whitish-iridescent stems and three leaflets per leaf instead of five.

## Replacement Recommendation

### Salmonberry

(*Rubus spectabilis*)

- delicate pink flowers in spring
- ✦ provides excellent nesting habitat for small birds
- ✦ orange berries are edible for people and wildlife



## Japanese Knotweed (*Polygonum cuspidatum*)

Shrub-like, deciduous herbaceous perennial that can grow over 10 feet tall

### Why it's Invasive

Introduced as an ornamental, it spreads quickly to form dense thickets that exclude native vegetation and greatly alter natural ecosystems. A significant threat to streamside areas, it can survive severe floods and rapidly colonize scoured banks.

### Identification

- ✦ plant can reach 9 - 12 feet
- ✦ reddish-brown stems
- ✦ characteristic heart-shaped leaves 6 inches long, 3 - 4 inches wide
- ✦ tiny greenish-white flowers form branched sprays in summer and turn quickly into small winged fruits



(cc) Jan Samanek, State Phytosanitary Administration, Bugwood.org

### Warning

Do not cut or pull knotweed – small stem fragments resprout vigorously. Please report this plant to the City's Watershed Restoration Coordinator or your local watershed council for treatment options.



### Replacement Recommendation

#### Red osier dogwood (*Cornus sericea*)

- ✦ red branches provide winter color
- ✦ offers nesting sites and cover for birds
- ✦ blossoms provide nectar for bees



Above: Berries provide food for many bird species, such as Purple Finch. Dr. Thomas G. Barnes



## Morning Glory (*Convolvulus sepium/arvensis*)

A perennial, climbing vine that can grow roots more than 15 feet underground

### Why it's Invasive

Grows along the ground and over anything in its path, shading out and crushing native vegetation.

### Identification

- ♦ leaves shaped like arrowheads or hearts with pointed tips and come in various shades of green
- ♦ white trumpet-shaped flowers bloom continually throughout the year



### Removal

Pull stem and all roots out of the ground – may take several seasons of diligent pulling to remove entirely. Shade out over time with trees and shrubs. Keep morning glory from climbing up and over other plants.

## Replacement Recommendation

### Stream violet (*Viola glabella*)

- ♦ ground cover
- ♦ yellow flowers with purple lines in the center
- ♦ provides cover and nesting sites for birds



*Hydaspe Fritillary butterfly caterpillars rely on this violet for food.* © Walter Siegmund



# Reed Canarygrass (*Phalaris arundinacea*)

Large, perennial grass, growing up to 6 feet tall

## Why it's Invasive

Extremely aggressive in wetlands and riparian areas; chokes out native plants and grows too densely to provide adequate cover for small mammals and waterfowl.

## Identification

- ✦ leaf blades broad, flat and hairless
- ✦ sturdy, often hollow stems to ½ inch in diameter with some red near top
- ✦ flowers borne in spikes along 3 - 6 inch stalks that grow above the leaves, bloom in June and July
- ✦ mature seed clusters are light brown, seeds persist in soil for many years

## Removal

Slowly reduce Reed canarygrass by mowing or weed-whacking multiple times per year, especially before the seeds mature in mid-summer. Plant trees and shrubs to slowly shade out Reed canarygrass; mow around trees and shrubs until they are taller than the grass. Smaller infestations on dry land can be dug out by hand.



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## Replacement Recommendation

**Tufted hair grass**  
(*Deschampsia cespitosa*)

- ✦ attracts birds, butterflies and moths
- ✦ seed heads provide beauty and interest in winter



Oregon Junco  
©Walter Siegmund



## Scotch Broom (*Cytisus scoparium*)

Perennial, evergreen shrub reaching heights up to 10 feet

### Why it's Invasive

Forms dense stands in sunny, open fields that shade and crowd out native plants and young trees, destroying wildlife habitat. Listed as a Class B noxious weed in Washington and Oregon.

### Identification

- ♦ trademark bright yellow flowers bloom in late spring
- ♦ stiff branches, dark green and broom-like with few leaves
- ♦ seedpods are brown or black, flat with hairs on edges
- ♦ seeds can last for 60 years in soil

### Removal

Dense, fibrous roots can make hand removal difficult. Try using a pick-axe.

## Replacement Recommendation

### Blue blossom

(*Ceanothus thyrsiflorus*)

- ♦ great clusters of blue/purple lilac-like flowers
- ♦ evergreen
- ♦ attracts birds

California Tortoiseshell butterfly caterpillars rely on *ceanothus* plants for food.

© Calibas



## Yellow Flag Iris (*Iris pseudacorus*)

Large perennial wetland iris  
grows in or near bodies of water

### Why it's Invasive

Plant interferes with wetland function by competing with native plants that filter out pollution in the water. Can severely restrict water flow in all types of waterways and is difficult and expensive to remove.

### Identification

- ✦ grows to 5 feet tall, yellow flowers on stalks
- ✦ sword-like leaves are long and flat

### Removal

Hand removal is a poor option because plants can grow from bulb and stem fragments.

### Warning

Please report Yellow flag iris to the City's Watershed Restoration Coordinator or your watershed council for treatment options.



© Left & front cover: Nancy Loewenstein, Auburn University, Bugwood.org

## Replacement Recommendation

### Oregon iris

(*Iris tenax*) for dry sites

### Wild flag

(*Iris setosa*) for wet sites

- ✦ attractive purple irises suited to landscaping
- ✦ both species attract bumblebees





# For More Information

## City of Gresham

Laura Guderyahn,  
Watershed Restoration Coordinator  
503-618-2246  
[laura.guderyahn@GreshamOregon.gov](mailto:laura.guderyahn@GreshamOregon.gov)

## Johnson Creek Watershed Council

Watershed Stewardship Coordinator  
503-652-7477  
[info@jcwcc.org](mailto:info@jcwcc.org)

## Columbia Slough Watershed Council

Fairview Creek Outreach Coordinator  
503-281-1132  
[info@columbiaslough.org](mailto:info@columbiaslough.org)



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